



March 2011

Dear Westford Residents,

The Town Hall Grand Opening was by all accounts a success, and I would like to personally thank all who were involved in not only this event, but in the Town Hall reconstruction project itself. So many people worked so diligently on this project, and we are delighted with the result. The event was broadcast live by WCAT, and is available for viewing on our website.

Spring is around the corner, and with it comes our Annual Town Meeting. Please join us on Saturday, March 26, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Abbot School gymnasium, when you will hear the State of the Town, and exercise your civic rights by voting in favor or against the 37 articles in our warrant this year. Last month's newsletter outlines most of the major articles in the warrant, although the cell tower bylaw will not appear at this town meeting as consensus is still being reached.

In April two highly regarded Department Heads will be retiring - Finance Director, Suzanne Marchand, and Tax Collector, Cheryl Accardi will be retiring from the town, after many years of exemplary service. A retirement party for Suzanne will be held on April 15th at the Westford Regency with tickets available from dfleming@westfordma.gov. We are respecting the wishes of Cheryl in holding a farewell brunch in the town hall on April 13th. Please join us at either event to wish these two well as they embark on a new chapter in their lives.

Please join me in extending congratulations to Fire Chief Rich Rochon who was granted accreditation by the Massachusetts Fire Service Commission on March 7th. Chief Rochon joins approximately 50 Fire Chiefs in the Commonwealth for receipt of this distinguished award. The accreditation status is based upon our chief meeting the commission's requirements for education, training and experience in areas relevant to fire and emergency service management.

At the suggestion of Chris McClure, IT Director, we have begun a new agenda item on Board of Selectmen meeting agendas called "Spotlight on Westford". These will be 5 minute topics where we highlight the achievements of individual departments. These will be formatted into short clips which will be available on WCAT stations, and on our web site.

The Board of Selectmen requested Pan Am Railways representatives appear before them to discuss the unacceptable situation of train cars being stored, or left idling, on the Graniteville railroad tracks. Our State Representative, Jim Arciero, and our State Senator, Eileen Donoghue, are both assisting us with this problem. I am pleased to note that after John Mangiaratti, Assistant Town Manager, tracked down Frederick Fraini, Jr, Supervisory Railroad Safety Specialist for Hazardous Materials, in the Department of Transportation office in Cambridge, the cars holding hazardous materials were removed within a day. Mr. Fraini personally visited us in the town hall twice, and has been very instrumental in assisting us with Pan Am Railways. We will continue to meet with Pan Am executives to see if we can persuade them to use their actual freight yards in other places for train car storage, and stop using the tracks in Graniteville, which are located over our aquifer, as much as possible.

Enjoy these warmer temperatures, and I hope to see you all at town meeting.

Sincerely,



Jodi Ross
Town Manager
978-692-5500

jross@westfordma.gov
www.westfordma.gov/tm

**Town Hall is Open
Again at 55 Main Street**

**Town Meeting is
Saturday, March 26,
2011 at 10:00am in the
Abbot School
Gymnasium.**

Employee Spotlight:

**New Employees
Chris Coutu, GIS
Coordinator,
and Chris Kluchman,
Town Planner**

**Fire Chief Rich Rochon
for becoming
accredited by Mass
Fire Service
Commission**

**Bill Turner,
Conservation Agent,
for completing 25 years
with the town**

Watch Meetings Online



www.westfordcat.org

Visit
www.westfordma.gov
for current news and
information.



NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY

The Drug Enforcement Administration, in cooperation with the Westford Health Department and Westford Police Dept, will give the public an opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. The DEA and its partners will hold their second National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day at sites nationwide. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high--more Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined, according to the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

So clean out your closets and medicine cabinets and bring your expired and unused prescription meds to us on the 30th. To ensure anonymity, please cross out any identifying information prior to dropping off medications.

Date: Saturday, April 30th

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Location: Cameron Senior Center

For questions on Take Back Day or Sharps Program, please call the Health Department @ 978 692-5509.



"LET'S MOVE WESTFORD" **CAMPAIGN KICK OFF**

In an effort to address the growing public health challenge of childhood and adult obesity, the Westford Health Department is embarking on a year- long campaign called, "Let's Move Westford". The "Let's Move Westford" campaign is based on a national initiative launched by Michelle Obama. The goal of the program is to reduce the problem of obesity through improved nutrition and increased activity.

Over the next 12 months, the Health Department will partner with schools, local businesses, Westford recreation department, community organizations, local hospitals and other town departments, to provide educational and activity based programming. Our goal: to motivate Westford residents to develop better eating habits and seek active living opportunities to help ensure a healthier future for our community. Come join us for our first 2 events and help kick off our campaign:

EATING HEALTHY ON THE RUN

Finding it difficult to balance the business of life with healthy eating and weight maintenance? Finding yourself and your family grabbing take out because you're too busy to make a meal? Eating healthy doesn't have to be a chore or take up all

of your time. Come join us and learn how you can make better choices for eating on the run! Presenter is Lucy Wisnowski-Hutchings, a Registered Dietitian and Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist working as a clinical dietitian at Emerson Hospital. Cosponsored by Emerson Hospital. Call 978 692 -5509 to register by April 1.

**EATING HEALTHY ON THE RUN****Date:** April 6**Time:** 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.**Location:** Town Hall- 2nd floor conference room**Fee:** Free**HEALTH FAIR AND CHILD SAFETY DAY**

Are you ready to start moving but need new activity ideas? Want to know some baseline health information by having your cholesterol, thyroid, blood sugar, blood pressure and pulmonary function screened? If so come join us for our town Health Fair and Child Safety Day! The fair will provide free health screenings, educational information on a variety of health issues, and food and exercise demonstrations.

The Westford Police Department will also be conducting their annual safety event which will include a bicycle rodeo, car seat check point and information on other child safety issues. Officers will assist children in learning the rules of the road and how to keep themselves safe while riding their bicycles, scooters, and skateboards. Pedestrian safety information will also be provided. Helmets will be checked to ensure they are appropriate for the child and that they fit properly and officers will be checking and installing car seats. Parents will be trained on how to properly install their car seats and assist them in that process. The goal is to ensure that each child is in an appropriate car seat and that seat is properly installed. Sponsors and vendors will be on hand to provide safety information for the whole family.

The day is co-sponsored by the Health Department, Emerson Hospital, Westford Police Department and numerous local businesses. Enjoy a day that will provide participants with fun filled educational and family activities.

Date: Saturday, 5/21**Times:** 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Health Fair-Abbot Gym**11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Child Safety Activities- school lawn and driveway****Location:** Abbot School**Fee:** Free**SERV SAFE CLASS**

The Westford Health Department is offering a second ServSafe food safety training course. This two day class was recently held and filled up immediately. To accommodate those who were unable to attend, we will be scheduling another class. ServSafe is nationally accredited, recognized and often required by State and Federal Food Code(s) depending on the nature and menu of a particular food event in Massachusetts. It is available for members and organizations of the Westford Community. The \$70.00 cost includes text book, exam answer sheet and exam booklet. All registrations and fees must be into the Health Department Office by April 28th. Please call 978-692-5509 for more information and to register.

Dates: Attendance on both May 17 and May 24**Times:** 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.**Location:** Millennium School All Purpose Room**Fee:** \$70



How can I get a utility wire fixed near my house?

The Town is not responsible for utility wires. The utility companies also fix low hanging wires. The top wire is usually for electricity, the middle wire is usually for the phone, and the lowest is for cable. Highway Department employees are not equipped to go near high, voltage wires. If there is a tree limb on an electric wire, contact National Grid at 800-322-3223.

How do I report a downed branch in the road not effected by utility wires?

Contact the Highway Department at 978-692-5520.

How can I contact the local utility companies?

National Grid (Electric): www.nationalgridus.com or call 800-322-3223
National Grid (Gas): www.nationalgridus.com or call 800-548-8000
Verizon : www.verizon.com or call 800-837-4966
Comcast: www.comcast.com or call 978-692-6500

How do I report a burnt out streetlight?

For above ground wiring you can contact National Grid at 800-322-3223 or go to their web site: www.nationalgridus.com , click on STREET LIGHT REPAIR, under the heading "SERVICE ORDERS" and fill in the form. You may also contact the Highway Department at 978-692-5520 and we will report to National Grid. We need the exact address and Pole number if possible.

If you live in a sub-division with Underground wiring (i.e. no poles), please contact the Highway Department at 978-692-5520.

Who can I call to remove a dead animal?

The Highway Dept. is not responsible for picking up dead animals. You can contact the Animal Control Officer at 978-692-4574.

Will the Town reimburse me for damages done to my car from running over a pothole?

The Town does not reimburse for pothole damage unless the Town was negligent in filling the pothole in a timely manner. Potholes are considered to be the normal consequence of the freeze/thaw cycles of New England weather. Once notified of a pothole, the Highway Department is responsible for repairing it in a reasonable period of time (48 hours). To report potholes call the Highway Department at 978-692-5520.

Is the State responsible for any roads in Westford?

Yes. Route 110 (Littleton Rd.), Powers Rd. and a portion of Boston Rd. by Route 495 are maintained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are therefore not under the care of the Westford Highway Dept. Signal lights in these areas are also maintained by the State. For questions regarding these roadways (potholes and such) contact MA DOT at 508-754-7204.

Who can I call after hours to report potentially hazardous roadway conditions?

For any after hours emergency situations concerning Westford roadways, please contact the Westford Police at 978-692-2161 and the dispatcher will contact standby Highway personnel.

***Who is responsible for Street signs?***

Street signs are placed and maintained by the Highway Department. Regulatory signs (speed zones, stop signs etc.) are requested through the Board of Selectmen and approved after Police Department and Engineering study. Due to budget constraints, Advisory signs (blind driveway etc.) are no longer provided by the Highway Department. We caution residents that due to the proliferation of signs, most signs have little impact and placing them in front of other resident's homes can become an issue.

What is the Town's Right of Way (ROW)?

Homeowners should be aware that in most instances, they do not own the land up to the edge of road pavement or sidewalk. The Town generally owns the land from the edge of roadway up to 15 feet back, depending on the particular road. There may be underground utilities within these areas and homeowners should be careful as to what they place in these areas.

- Trees, shrubbery, fences, lawn sprinkler systems or gardens within the Right of Way may be damaged during snow removal operations.
- Basketball posts and nets are prohibited from being installed in the Town of Westford's Right of Way.
- The Town will not be responsible for damage to such items within the Right of Way.

The Westford Highway Department would also like to take this opportunity to remind residents of the Board of Selectmen Approved Mailbox Policy.

You may view the policy as part of the snow and ice procedures on the highway website: www.westfordma.gov/highway.



Highway Dept. Grader widening the roadways – February 2011



New Planner Hired

A new Planner has been hired to replace Ross Altobelli, who moved to Texas before Thanksgiving. [Chris Kluchman AICP](#) has been working with the Town on a contract basis since late December and, as of February 18, was hired to become the full-time staff planner.

Chris has more than 20 years of experience as a professional planner. As owner and principal of Eaton Planning, a one-person planning consultancy based in Lexington, she has provided consulting services to more than ten municipalities in Massachusetts, as well as to multiple state agencies and to the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association. Prior to moving to Massachusetts 6 years ago, Chris spent many years working as a planner in Oregon where she was involved with municipal, regional and private sector planning.

Thanks to Jodi Ross, Pam Tebbetts and the Human Resources staff, and the members of the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen who all contributed to the candidate review process. We're grateful for Chris's contributions to Town government in the past couple of months and are very excited to welcome her as a full-time member of our staff.

Zoning Amendments Proposed for Annual Town Meeting

Public hearings were opened in February regarding several zoning amendments proposed for consideration leading up to the March 26 Annual Town Meeting. At the continued hearings on March 7, the Planning Board voted the following recommendations:

Article 29 Section 5.3 Signs – Replace Section 5.3 Signs With New Organization

The Board voted **5 - 0** to **recommend** Article 29 as it appears in the Warrant.

Article 30 Amend Chapter 173, Section 5.3 Signs – Purpose, Permit Granting Authority and Temporary Signs

The Board voted **5 - 0** to **recommend** Article 30 as it appears in the Warrant.

Article 31 Combined Amendments to Chapter 173, Section 5.3 Signs of the Zoning Bylaw Including Reorganization, Purpose, Permit Granting Authority and Temporary Signs

The Board voted **5 - 0** to **recommend** Article 31 as it appears in the Warrant.

**Article 32 Chapter 173, Sections 2.1.1, 3.6 and 4.1 – Route 110 Minot's Corner Overlay District**

The Board did not take a vote on Article 32 as it appears in the Warrant but requested that the Article remain on the Warrant. The Board will deliberate further in a continued public hearing scheduled for March 21 at 9:15 PM at Town Hall.

Article 33 Chapter 173, Section 9.4 Site Plan Review for Religious, Educational and Child Care Uses

The Board voted **5 – 0** to **recommend** Article 33 as it appears in the Warrant.

Article 34 Amend Chapter 173, Section 6.2 Siting of Wireless Communications Facilities (WCF)**Update on Timing of Wireless Initiative**

At the continued public hearing on March 7, 2011, the Planning Board voted 5-0 to withdraw Article 34 and requested its removal from the March 26, 2011 Warrant. The following night, the Board of Selectmen followed this recommendation, and the article does not appear on the March 26 Warrant.

The Board kept the public hearing open, and will deliberate this matter further at a continued public hearing scheduled for **April 4 at 7:35 PM** at Town Hall in anticipation of submitting a Warrant Article for the following Town Meeting.

A recent [article in the Lowell Sun](#) provides a good summary of the Board's rationale for this action. The goal is to continue the public hearing with greater public participation as we continue to work toward a proposal for consideration at a future Town Meeting.

Updates on this work will continue to be posted to the [town website](#).



News from the Building Department

Now that the snow is melting and the weather is warming, projects for the home are on some residents' minds. Just to let everyone know, over the past year there has been several changes to both building codes and federal/state requirements that will have an effect on your project.

The Massachusetts State Building Code is now in its' 8th edition (2 years ago we were under the 6th edition). The building code was once a single volume book, now it is a combination of 6 books produced by the International Code Council and then there is the Massachusetts amendments which are areas of the building code that are specifically different from the national model code. The energy code requirements are much more restrictive than ever before. Every building inspector is required to take a specialized training course sponsored by the state in order to inspect and enforce the energy code requirements properly.

A new sheet metal permit (required by the state) has been in effect since February. Generally speaking, any sheet metal work will require a permit and all work to be done by a licensed sheet metal person.

The federal government implemented and the state took over the new lead paint rules and regulations. Referred to as the RRP rules and regulations (Repair, Renovate, Paint), this requires all contractors that are working on a home older than 1978 to have registered and taken a class in the proper handling of lead paint. Enforcement is through the state division of occupational safety their website is; www.mass.gov/dos.

The federal government also updated all of the FEMA maps and is available online at; www.fema.gov
Any time that a resident has questions about building codes (such as which version is being used etc.) please click on the Town of Westford Building Department website: www.westfordma.gov/building. We strive to provide updated information on our website, as to changes or concerns that have occurred within the building code community, as quickly as possible.

Water Department News

Save the date...

The Water Department is holding an open house on Wednesday May 4 at the 60 Forge Village Road Treatment Facility from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm to celebrate National Drinking Water Week. All are invited to tour the facility and visit water conservation, recycling, and environmentally friendly landscaping and gardening displays. Kids will enjoy seeing different types of aquatic organisms and receive stickers, coloring books, and balloons (while supplies last). Refreshments will be served, and the winners of the 4th grade poster contest will also be announced. Free water conservation devices (while supplies last), and information on how to purchase a rain barrel will be available. Be sure to visit the Water Department website (www.westfordma.gov/water) for more information as it becomes available.



CAMERON'S FOCUS ON WELLNESS

The Cameron Senior Center is buzzing with activity. We invite you to stop by 20 Pleasant Street and join us. Our office hours are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. and additional activity hours are Sunday afternoons from noon to 3 p.m. for the fitness room, cards, and conversation and/ or pot luck luncheons and Thursday evening's doors open at 6:30 p.m. for Bingo from 7 – 9p.m. Any resident age 60 or older should receive the Council on Aging's monthly newsletter. If you have not been receiving it you can view it online at www.westfordma.gov/coa or contact our office at 978 692-5523. Many of our activities are now focused on wellness and coincide with our mission of enabling seniors to remain safely in their homes for as long as possible.

On Thursday, March 24th at 10 a.m. Joanne McCole RN, BSN from Life Care Center of Nashoba Valley will introduce us to A Matter of Balance with an informational class. Joanne is a Master Trainer of A Matter of Balance and will be teaching an eight-week course free of charge starting April 7th at 10 a.m. Many older adults express concerns about falling and restrict their activities. This award-winning program is designed to manage falls and increase activity levels. This program emphasizes practical strategies to manage falls. Participants will learn to view falls as controllable, set goals for increasing activity, make changes to reduce fall risks at home, and learn exercises to increase strength and balance. If you have ever been concerned about falls, are interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength, had falls in the past or have restricted activities because of falling concerns then this is a program not to be missed. After the introductory session on Thursday, March 24th at 10 a.m. the classes will start on April 7th and will meet every Thursday for 8 weeks from 10 a.m. until noon at Cameron. Please call to register at 978 692-5523, no charge but regular attendance is expected. Class size is limited so don't be left out.

Sleep deprivation: cause and treatment will be presented by Emerson Hospital Home Care partnering with Emerson Cardio-Pulmonary-Neurology Sleep Disorder Program to bring you an interesting talk to help you understand sleep disorders such as insomnia and sleep deprivation. Come learn the dynamics of sleep and be on your way to getting a good nights' rest. This seminar will be on Tuesday, March 22nd from 12:30 – 1:30. Register at 978 692-5523, complimentary desserts will be served to those who pre-register.

Wellness Resource Fair on April 8th from 1 – 3 p.m. in our multipurpose room. You will have the opportunity to visit each vendor's table, ask questions and get information. The companies represented will be Boston Walk in Bathtubs, Diabetic Shoe Company, Perkins School for the Blind Library Services, A & A Medical Supply Company, Lifeline Emergency Response and more. Light refreshments will be served. For planning purposes please call us if you are attending at 978 692-5523 DROP INS ARE WELCOME,

Basic Zumba will offer a free inter active demonstration on Monday, March 21st at 10 a.m. Classes will begin on Monday, April 4 from 10 – 10:40 a.m. at Cameron for \$3. per class. The instructor is Amulya Deepak and she will present a series of 6 classes with additional dates of April 11 and 25th and May 2, 9 and 16th. Call 978 692-5523 to pre-register.

- Aerobics classes Wednesday at 9 and Friday at 8:30. Fee \$3.
- Chair Movement Exercise classes Tuesday and Thursday 10 – 11. Fee \$3.
- Fitness/Strength training room available weekday hours for residents age 60 and over. Fee \$50. annually.
- Gentle Stretch Yoga on Wednesday 1:30 – 2:30 fee \$3.
- Bone Builders Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. No charge wait list only at 978 692-5523.
- Hearing & Hearing Aid tests on Monday, March 21st from 9:30 – 10:30. Appointments are required by the Board of Health at 978 692-5509.
- Blood Pressure and more the second Tuesday from 9:30 – 10:30 with the Board of Health and the 4th Wednesday from 8 – 10 a.m. with the Lowell VNA. Free.



Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Department

The Spring/Summer 2011 Recreation brochure has been mailed out to residents and is available on line at www.westfordrec.com.

New program offerings include Westford Kids on the Run created by Westford Academy students Apoorva Charloori, Miranda Collard, and Natasha Gorodetskiy. The program introduces young runners to aspects of track and field and cross-country events. Join the WA students at Veterans Memorial Complex – Stony Brook Middle School track on April 26 at 6:15PM for information and free demonstration.

Adult Badminton – a fun, fast paced, social activity for both experienced and beginning players. Program is limited to 16 players per session with sessions offered Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Ever popular RED SOX and Lowell Spinners tickets go on sale Thursday, May 5 at 6:00PM at the Department office 35 Town Farm Road. Red Sox tickets - limit 4 per person.

Even though there is still snow on the ground it is not too soon to plan for summer activities. From traditional day programs to specialized events you'll find something for you and your family to enjoy.

Cemetery – The Cemetery Commission wishes to remind people that as of April 1st artificial flowers, wreaths, sprays, potted plants, and decorations are prohibited during the mowing season (April-November). All Memorial Day potted plants and decorations will be removed seven days following the Holiday. One flowerbed is permitted per lot to be located in front of the monument and not to exceed the width of the monument. The flowerbed is to be no more than one foot from the base of the monument.